

# Mental Health Checklist



The rush of everyday life and work can pull us in so many directions that we lose perspective. This can cause problems with relationships, job performance, and physical and mental well-being. We can protect our mental health by using the following checklist:

## Stress Checklist

Stress is a natural part of everyday life. Left unchecked, however, stress can cause physical, emotional and behavioral disorders that can affect your health, vitality and peace of mind, and personal and professional relationships.

- ☐ Do minor disappointments and problems upset you more than they should?
- ☐ Do the small pleasures of life fail to satisfy you?
- ☐ Are you unable to stop worrying?
- ☐ Do you feel inadequate or suffer from self-doubt?
- ☐ Are you constantly tired?
- ☐ Do you experience flashes of anger over minor problems?
- ☐ Have you noticed a change in eating or sleeping patterns?
- ☐ Do you suffer from chronic pain, headaches or backaches?

**If you answered “yes” to most of these questions, consider the following suggestions for reducing or controlling stress:**

- **Be realistic.** If you feel overwhelmed by some activities, learn to say **NO!**
- **Shed the “superman/woman” urge.** No one is perfect, so don’t expect perfection from yourself or others.
- **Meditate** for 10 to 20 minutes.
- **Visualize** how you can manage a stressful situation more successfully.
- **Take one thing at a time.** Take 5 minutes in the morning to prioritize your tasks and tackle each one separately.
- **Find a hobby** that will give you a break from your worries.
- **Give in occasionally.** Be flexible.
- **Go easy with criticism.** You may expect too much.

- **Share your feelings** with family and friends. Don’t try to cope alone.
- **Live a healthy lifestyle** with good nutrition, adequate rest, regular exercise, limited caffeine and alcohol, and balanced work and play.

Everyone handles stress differently, some better than others. If you think you have too much stress in your life, it may be helpful to talk with a mental health professional, a member of the clergy, or a doctor. Because reactions to stress can be a factor in depression, anxiety and other mental and emotional disorders, they may suggest that you consult with a psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker or other qualified counselor.

## Depression Checklist

Every year more than 19 million American adults experience clinical depression. It affects men, women and children of all races and socio-economic groups, causing them to lose motivation, energy and the pleasure of everyday life. Clinical depression often goes untreated because people do not recognize its many symptoms. **The good news is that almost everyone who receives treatment will soon feel better.**

- ☐ Persistent sad, anxious or “empty” mood
- ☐ Sleeping too little or too much
- ☐ Reduced appetite and weight loss or increased appetite and weight gain
- ☐ Loss of interest or pleasure in activities once enjoyed
- ☐ Restlessness or irritability
- ☐ Persistent physical symptoms that do not respond to treatment (such as headaches, chronic pain, or constipation and other digestive disorders)
- ☐ Difficulty concentrating, making decisions or remembering
- ☐ Fatigue or loss of energy
- ☐ Feeling guilty, hopeless or worthless
- ☐ Thoughts of death or suicide

If you experience five or more of these symptoms for longer than two weeks, or if the symptoms are severe enough to interfere with your daily routine, see your doctor or a qualified mental health professional.

## Norfolk Community Services Board

248 West Bute Street Norfolk, Virginia 23510

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*providing mental health, mental retardation, and substance abuse services to Norfolk residents*

# May is Mental Health Awareness Month

## Key facts and stats



Thanks to amazing new medications, people who once were held prisoner by mental illness are reclaiming full, productive lives.

- Mental illness will strike one in five Norfolk residents this year, regardless of race, age, religion or economic status.
- Fear, embarrassment and shame often keep people from seeking treatment for mental illness. Breaking the cycle of intolerance and ignorance is essential to improving the mental health of our city.

### Children and Families

Good mental health is essential to the wellbeing and vitality of our families and neighborhoods,

- Every hour and 45 minutes another young person commits suicide.
- Terrorism and war have affected children and teens as much as adults—by spending time talking with their children, parents provide vital emotional support.
- At least one in 10 children—or about 5,000 Norfolk youth aged 5 to 19 years—has a serious emotional disturbance, but only 1,500 of them will receive treatment.
- Early identification, diagnosis and treatment can help children reach their full potential.

### College Students

Good mental health habits can help improve

academic performance, relationships and overall well-being.

- Ten percent of college students have been diagnosed with depression.
- Seven percent have an anxiety disorder.
- Five percent of college women have bulimia.

### Older Adults

Caring for your mental health is important at any age.

- Among adults age 55 and older, 20 percent have depression and more than 11 percent have an anxiety disorder.
- Men account for 83 percent of suicides by people over age 65.

### The Workplace

Good mental health is good for the bottom line.

- Untreated and mistreated mental illness cost the United States \$105 billion each year through lost productivity and \$8 billion in crime and welfare expenditures.

### Healthcare

Up to half of all visits to primary care physicians are due to conditions caused or exacerbated by mental or emotional problems.

- People with depression are more than four times as likely to have a heart attack than those without a history of the illness.

# MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS in your life

## Tips to Improve Your Mental Health--Every Day!

Try the following tips to help plan a week that will leave you feeling good, inside and out. If you are receiving treatment for a mental health problem, these little tips can help you manage your illness and support your treatment and recovery.

**sunday** **Relax.** Try meditating, taking a walk in a natural setting, or reaching out spiritually through prayer. Quiet reflection, alone or in the company of others can improve your state of mind, strengthen your sense of self and community, and give you time away from a hectic schedule to collect your thoughts and reenergize for the week ahead.

**monday** **Make a plan.** Decide what tasks you need to complete for the week and make a plan for when and how to do them. If you are over scheduled, decide what can wait a week or two. If you don't have much on your schedule, plan some activities you'll look forward to.

**tuesday** **Surround yourself with supportive people.** Make plans with family members and friends, or seek out activities at which you can meet new people, such as a club, class or support group. Reconnect with someone you have lost touch with and create new memories.

**wednesday** **Take care of your body.** Taking care of yourself physically can improve your mental health. Be sure to eat nutritious meals, avoid cigarettes, drink alcohol only in moderation, drink plenty of water, get enough sleep and exercise regularly.

**thursday** **Give of yourself.** Volunteer your time and energy to help someone else. You'll feel good about doing something tangible to help someone in need—and it's a great way to meet new people who share your interests and compassion.

**friday** **Broaden your horizons.** Create a change of pace or expand your interests. Explore a new hobby, plant a garden, plan a road trip, try a new restaurant, take dance lessons, or learn to play an instrument or speak another language.

**saturday** **Value yourself.** Treat yourself with kindness and respect, and avoid self-criticism. Take stock of the qualities you like about yourself, your accomplishments and abilities. Take some time every day to relax, reflect and rejuvenate.

